

BRISTOL WARREN REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
WORKSHOP
MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2005

The monthly workshop of the Bristol Warren Regional School Committee was held in the Library of Mt. Hope High School, 199 Chestnut Street, in Bristol, RI, on Monday, January 10, 2005. The Chairperson, Marjorie J. McBride, called the meeting to order at approximately 7:24 p.m.

Present: Marjorie J. McBride, William A. Estrella, Jr., William M. O'Dell, Thomas E. Skuba, Timothy L. Avila, Joyce M. Kinsella, John P. Saviano, Paul Silva and Beverly Z. Travers; Edward P. Mara, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Donna Bettencourt-Glavin, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Grants; and Jane F. Correia, Director of Administration and Finance

Absent: none

OPENING BUSINESS

All present were invited to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

Thomas Skuba, on behalf of the Building Committee, reported that four architectural firms have been interviewed. The Committee will meet again on January 13th at 7:00 PM at Kickemuit Middle School; the meeting is open to the public.

BUDGET/FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Skuba reported that the Subcommittee has begun the budget process and thus far have reviewed literacy and assessment and the 5 year asset protection plan. In breaking with past practices, the Subcommittee has decided to hold a public budget hearing to present the budget to the public. Their next meeting, on January 11th, will focus on high school facilities and programming issues and NEASC.

PERSONNEL/CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Silva said BWEA contract negotiations have begun; so far they are smooth and he is pleased with the progress. The next meeting is Tuesday, January 18th at 5:00 at Oliver and is closed.

POLICY/COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. O'Dell reported that the Subcommittee reviewed the following policies:

Home Schooling – Administration requested some changes which will be reviewed by legal counsel then again by the Subcommittee.

Sports Safety – The Committee agreed that the Superintendent should give directives in these instances and no policy was necessary.

Fraud Prevention – A policy is being worked up; will come to full committee for a vote as soon as possible.

Mission Statement—Strategic Plan Committee will review.

Administrators' Evaluation Tool – Tabled to next meeting.

Superintendent's Evaluation Tool – Will require a full meeting; new document will not be ready for next evaluation period.

Policy KK Visitors to the Schools – Tabled to next meeting.

Breathalyzer and Use of Facilities will also be addressed at the next meeting.

Mr. O'Dell wished to publicly thank the Superintendent for his handling of the bomb threat at the high school today. Mrs. Kinsella thanked Mrs. Glavin for her extensive preparation for the home schooling discussion and handling of the parents.

SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATES

High School Incident of January 10

Dr. Mara described the bomb threat incident at the high school. The threat was phoned in at approximately 7:35 AM; all students were immediately evacuated to the football field without going to their lockers, staff maintaining order throughout; busses were requested at 7:45 AM which arrived as they finished their routes; students were loaded on busses for warmth; sweeping of the building by authorities takes approximately 3 hours and with no alternate place for the students, they were dismissed; the building was cleared for reentry at approximately 12:00 noon; no bomb was found; students needing to reenter the building were escorted by staff. Dr. Mara said he was one member of a very strong team; there was full cooperation from police and fire departments. A \$1000 reward is being offered for information leading to a conviction. David Abbott at RIDE has been consulted about having to make up the day. Mr. Avila suggested that legal counsel be consulted about pressing civil charges. Mrs. Kinsella commented that peer pressure is one of the greatest draws for pressure, the person should be dealt with firmly and we should try to retrieve some of the expenses incurred.

Boat Building Project

The District is exploring the viability of a boat building project to be instituted at Mt. Hope. Alan Crisman, of the Mt. Hope Enterprise Zone, says there is much interest from the boat building community. It would provide externships for teachers and internships for students; student safety concerns are of prime importance.

Arts Magnet Program

Dr. Mara, Mrs. Glavin, Mr. Charles Mello and Ms. Judy Rowe recently visited a state of the art arts magnet school in Hartford, CT; the visit was very beneficial to help resolve issues and gain some ideas. The District plans to expand the program in the future if space becomes available. Opportunities for after school programs will be made available to all students in the District.

Hugh Cole Performance Ranking

Dr. Mara reported that due to blank answer forms being inadvertently counted by RIDE, Hugh Cole School was ranked incorrectly; the error was adjusted and the school is now ranked “High Performing and Sustaining.”

REGIONALIZATION STUDY COMMISSION

Mr. Estrella reported that the Commission consists of people from all around the educational community. Julia Steiny agreed to serve as chair. The group will address the five issues delineated in the bond legislation. It was the consensus of the members that the students are fine with regionalization, it is the parents and community members who need the unity speech. They also agreed to hold a public hearing for the stakeholders to elicit concerns and comments. They will request an extension of their deadline to September 2005.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ISSUES

Subcommittee Meetings

Mrs. McBride announced that Subcommittees will not be allowed to hold regular meetings before School Committee Workshops or Meetings; they must be scheduled on another day.

Dissemination of Meeting Information

The Committee discussed protocol for disseminating information to be discussed at meetings; discussion meetings, such as subcommittee meetings, should be spontaneous and flexible; information for regular School Committee meetings must be submitted in advance of the meeting and material distribution at the meeting is not allowed. Information requests and questions for administrators must be made by the Friday before the meeting to give adequate time for research and preparation.

Bullying Presentations

Mr. Saviano suggested that a particular speaker on bullying be secured for the high school; this is for the high school to explore.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – 8:40 PM

In accordance with Open Meeting Laws 42-46-5(a)(1)-(9), 2(b), Mr. Silva motioned to go into Executive Session at 8:40 PM to discuss

contracts and/or personnel issues; no action will be taken. Mr. Estrella seconded. The motion passed unanimously. After a brief discussion the Committee decided that Executive Session was not necessary.

ADJOURNMENT – 8:50 PM

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. O'Dell, seconded by Mr. Skuba, motioned to adjourn at 8:50 PM. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

William M. O'Dell, Secretary

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